

## Submitted Abstract

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## Abstract

Employees represent 40% of the agricultural workforce worldwide. Hiring, retaining and attracting workforce is a critical factor for future of farming in developed countries, where family workforce is declining, farms are becoming larger, and market competitiveness is increasing continuously. This is a particular challenge for dairy farms, affected by low career attractiveness among employees and high rates of turnover. Milk is the only agricultural product in the world produced daily, which requires a permanent workforce to perform regular labor-intensive tasks.

Empirical studies have highlighted a diverse range of strategies to attract and retain employees, including social benefits and safer working conditions, attractive wages and monetary incentives based on employees' performance, farmers' practices for managing human resources and the effect of these practices on farm performance.

However, these studies have focused on either farmers or employees perspective rather than on links between them and their work organization. In this sense, the concept of psychosocial work environment bring us valuable contribution, since it is defined as interpersonal and social interactions that influence work content, work organization and management behavior in workplace.

In this study, we hypothesize that employee management by farmer and work organization are affected by livestock farming systems, precisely the farm performance.

We interviewed individually 14 employees and 8 farmers (their employers) working in 8 dairy farms in Auvergne, a mountain region in France characterized by dairy and cheese production, including Protected Designation Origin labelling (PDO).

Our results show that farm technical and economic performance are strong stressors for farmers, who wants to maintain farm performance to keep running the farm and avoid critical situations. Farmers in mountain regions and complying with PDO requirements have additional stressors (land and herd management requirements).

On the one hand, such pressure is expressed by farmers and transmitted to employees through work organization: tasks performed, requirements and rhythms to perform tasks, technical skills. On the other hand, work organization improves tensions between farmers and employees, and the farmer-employee relationship is negatively affected. Three employees under precarious employment conditions decided to leave the farm during the study.

The current context of changes in livestock farms is related to increasing demand for a hired workforce; thus, farmers must be able to decrease turnover, and achieve their farm performance to remain competitive, while being attentive to build with employees an appropriate psychosocial work environment.